**Executive Dysfunction Symptoms, Impact & What Can Be Done**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Symptom** | **Classroom/Learning Impact** | **Have A Strategy** | **Need A Strategy** |
| **Executive Skills** |  |  |  |
| **Goal Setting** | * Not able to complete long team project * Have trouble breaking ultimate goals into tasks * Have trouble setting realistic goals * Long term projections completion * Doesn’t complete tasks on time * Set’s smaller goals * Everything is a draft * Students what to see the big picture vs the steps to get there * Overwhelmed (w/ long term projects) | * Break down task into steps w/ due dates * Conference goal setting * Due dates for completing smaller section * Give due dates break goal down into smaller goals * Demonstrate steps * Stop and evaluate * Break into **meaningful** steps * Set small goals | * Goal setting cannot be done to you it must be done with you. * Anticipation of future events (you have some control over this- support the student with what you know.) * Setting goals * Developing appropriate sequential steps ahead of time (a draft can help get started) * Determining the most effective method or steps to reach a goal with the student’s strengths in mind. * Support ways for students to keep track of time and steps to complete tasks and reach goals |
| **Planning/**  **Strategizing** | * Difficulty planning papers projects * Don’t know what needs to be done * Can’t see how steps build upon each other * Doesn’t know what to do – how to complete task or get started * Doesn’t know where to begin * Not getting homework done * Don’t know how to can’t think of strategies | * Help students Break down task into steps with due dates * Provide clear directions with visuals * Graphic organizers * Work backwards * Visualize the big picture * Planning sheet or organizer * Choice in strategies * Teach students how to use their agendas * graphic organizers * List of strategies available to child | * Students must learn planning strategies   see pdf: ef skills for educators |
| **Sequencing** | * Completes task/assignment in wrong order * Students become discouraged when they can’t complete a step * They’ve attempted because they haven’t’ completed the prerequisites * Inability to follow steps * Disorganization of written work * Not following directions * Ordering what needs to be done * Time order * Students struggle with written language and summarizing * Confused * Incorrect answers | * # steps, highlight directions * Give task 1- section @ a time * Scaffold * Visual schedules * Flow chart-pictures showing what to do in order. * Checklist – check as you complete each step * Organizers * Graphic organizers * Teach how to use them * Summarize strategies first, next, then, finally | * Sequencing Facts:   • Before, During, After  • Present Time  • Regular Occurrence, Personal Experience  • Sequence of simple then complex events  see pdf: ef skills for educators |
| **Organization of Materials** | * Loses papers, materials supplies * Turning in late homework * Cannot find things * Messy work area lost supplies * Disorganization can cause frustration * Disorganized desk | * Develop a system w/ student folders side desk organizer, extra desk * Give a concrete starting point * Color coded * Use visuals * Give clear pictures of the desired end * Work with child to model how to clean des- tell class- Let’s put this paper in specific folder and wait until done * Weekly plan to keep organized * Accordion notebook * Things separated out for them and stored in different places | * Strategies for Keeping Things Tidy: * Use a bin system or folder system * Take a picture of what “clean” looks like * Break down into manageable, small steps * Getting Thoughts on Paper: * Cognitive Mapping * Keeping a daily and weekly planner * What Parents Can Do: * Collaborate with students when developing a strategy * Be flexible and ready to brainstorm * Make it fun, whenever possible * Prepare to choose your battles |
| **Time Management** | * Procrastination - Waits until last minute to finish book, project, etc. * Doesn’t complete task * No concept of time * Inability to prioritize * Slow to start easily gets off task * Work not completed on time * Can’t get things done in a timely manner * Always last to finish * Never finishes what they start | * Break down task or put approximate time frames * Visual timers * Set time limits * Teach student to set reasonable limits * Break down large/long term projects * Give timer to complete smaller sections of work – maybe 1st guest gets 10 mins etc. * Project plans * Number order for homework * Peer teacher check in | • **Understanding the schema of time** as it applies to planning: All activities require time to set up, to complete a task and to clean or wrap up  • **Time estimation**: Knowing the task, knowing the steps of tasks, over versus under estimating: only versus could  • **Tracking and recording** time: visually, mentally, physically  • **Passage of time (pace)-** Starting and stopping a task at a predicted time and Pacing accordingly to meet those time goals  • **Using Time Manipulatives** |
| **Executive/Goal-directed Attention** | * Inability to finish a task * Distractibility * Knows what he’s working toward * Doesn’t see big picture * Setting goals | * Provide environment with fewer distractions * Cues to redirect * Checklist and self rewarding for task completion * Chart with goal at top. * Maybe collect sticker and after so many stickers reaches goals – visuals * Show steps or final project * Conferencing * Humor! * proximity | • Selection  • Capacity  – **The human brain can only attend to so much information at one time.**  – **Typically this is about 7 (+ or – 2 ) pieces of information.**  • In a child, the capacity to hold information is less as their attention systems are still developing.  • As a result, at any one time, less information is processed and remembered than an adult |
| **Task Persistence** | * Not completing work * Inability to finish task * Not able to stick to task * Giving up * Missing work | * Break down tasks into smaller more doable pieces * Reward after small increments * Provide environment with fewer distractions * Cues to redirect * Checklist and self rewarding for task completion * Work and share after each step * Positive encouragement * Check in | * When teaching shorten to get success. * When one never feels successful there is no reason to keep trying if you feel like you continuously fail. |
| **Working Memory** | * Not retaining ideas for comprehension or writing * Inability to take what you know and use it to complete a task * To use what you remember to solve problems * Forgets what/how to do something * Loses sight of goal easily * Forgets directions * Doesn’t know where to begin working through task * Forgets what to do and gets incorrect answers | * Lots of visuals and mnemonics * Visual to do lists * Memory tricks * Practice routines * Write down steps * Keep log * Picture cues * Check lists * Cards * Notebook with space to keep notes * Materials list * Study guides | Typically developing memory involves different mechanisms served by separate brain circuits. Two types of memory are:   * **Procedural memory and Episodic memory**. These two types of memory activate two different neural pathways. |
| **Set Shifting** | * Not sure what to do next * Trouble moving from step to step * Confused with what to do next * Gets hung up on one thing | * Checklists * Picture flow chart of next step checklist * Use a list of steps * Timers cues * Repeat directions * Eye contact | * What to do with limited lesson time |
| **Social Emotional Regulation Strand** |  |  |  |
| **Response Inhibition (impulse control)** | * Blurts out * Touches others * Starts tasks before directions * In other people’s business and personal space * Body revved up or too slow * Distracts others * Yelling out * Acting out * Tantrums * Disruption * Shouting out (others can’t answer) | * Model & role play social stories visual cues/signals * Teach – how does your engine run? * Activities to slow down or get yourself moving * Hold a sign up when you want to respond * sticks to share * Velcro on desk * Positive encouragement * Expectations clearly stated * Behavior charts * Toss the toy only speak when something is in your hand * Group participatory story time * Need response when is it ok to call out. * Movement breaks * Teacher/student time-out * Go get a drink * Picture cards * Tally charts to see how many time yells out | see:   * **How to Help and Support Impulsive Students** * From [Sue Watson](http://specialed.about.com/bio/Sue-Watson-9126.htm), former About.com Guide |
| **Emotional Control** | * Impacts social interactions * Anger * Keeps from moving on * Mind occupied * Extreme emotional ups and downs * Tears/frustration interferes with work * Disrupting peers | * Model & role play social stories visual cues/signals * Feelings journal * Sensory strategies * Teach relaxation breathing with feeling angry * Safe place to “calm down” * Positive encouragement * Expectations clearly stated * Behavior charts * Calming techniques * “yoga breaths” * Time-out * Go for a walk * Desk off to side * Move to another location | 1. Approach *low and slow!!* 2. *Stay nearby, but say little (raging amygdale make lousy conversational partners . . )* 3. *First change the body, than change the mind (or . . ‘first walk, than talk’)*  * over or under arousal * Teach the zipper |
| **Adaptability** | * Becomes stressed or pre-occupied w/ changes – unable to concentrate on work * Aversive to change * In ability to change * Hard to adjust to new situation * Disruption when faced with something new | * Warn ahead of time for schedule changes * Schedule shown each day * Practice/model new situation * “ice breakers” * “what ifs” * Give a schedule ahead of time * Let students know what changes will happen * Rewards when goal is met | * prepare and support |